

Alachua ARES/NFARC/NF4AC Clubs

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 9, 2022

Attendance: 17. Meeting held in person at the residence of KX4Z, Dr. Gordon Gibby; the meeting was also held via ZOOM. The meeting location was ad hoc and caused by inability to secure reliable site for the monthly meeting. Also impending Tropical Storm Nicole dictated many wanted to attend from their homes instead of live.

Gordon Gibby
Leland Gallup
Eric Pleace
David Huckstep
Brett Wallace
Vann Chesney
Dean Covey
Jeff Capehart
Mike KD4INH
Earl McDow
Mike kd4inh
Mike WB2FKO
Wendell Wright
Susan Halbert
Rosemary Jones
Amy WA4AMY
John Simmonds

Introductions. From 1830 until 1859 when the meeting commenced. The NFARC/NF4AC radio club met for this month in person and via Zoom.

- 1. INTRODUCTION/DISCUSSION OF TS NICOLE RESPONSE/APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2022 MINUTES.** In a first for our ARES group, we conducted a scheduled meeting in the middle of a hurricane response! Vann and Brett are deployed to the Senior Center, one of the two shelters that have been opened today for TS Nicole. Dean is at home. Jeff is mobile but for the purpose of TS Nicole should be one of three at the EOC radio room for this TS Nicole activation. Rosemary is at home. Wendell and Susan Halbert are at the Alachua County EOC radio room. The EOC has tested circuits with VHF Packet and VARA FM. Has checked in on local and SARNET; Wendell has checked in on SHARES and the HF Net. Mike, KD4INH....Gordon commends Mike for keeping DARK up and running. Earl McDow, who is live at the meeting, has been working on his HF kit at home. Eric Pleace is also live at the meeting, griping about the antenna woes with which he constantly contends. Gordon has been BUSY with school, EOC today – where he helped work staffing for the shelters and EOC, and developed our hurricane TS Nicole 205. Amy is at home and will try to join on Saturday the lab n lunch for working on Winlink connections. Her county hasn't opened shelters. Dave Huckstep is serving as VHF command net NCS from his home, and is undertaking this task as the meeting is underway. Leland suggested Dave develop a tentative

net control roster and send it out in the event it might be needed. Dental tower VARA FM digipeater is up and running. October 2022 minutes approved.

2. **NEW METHOD FOR REPORTING ARES HOURS.** Jeff is signing in to the EOC and is heading to the radio room as we discuss “his” agenda item; will ask him later about the October hours...he came on later and reported that we’d had two exercises, three meetings, 13 other activities, Ian AAR, and public service reviews (mostly EOC): total 147 hours for October.
3. **REVIEW: EOC REQUESTED SUMMARY OF ARES/NFARC/NF4AC ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2022 TO DATE.** EOC has asked us for a list of all that we have done since Jan 22. We do not know why they have requested the document. KX4Z has shown an earlier draft and the current draft has not yet been placed on our website. A host of things that we’ve done and that are in the report: from activations to radio courses, rebuilding radio room, Hurricane Ian deployments, VHF ARES nets, Field Day participation, articles published in NFL section newsletter; digipeater system maintenance; VARA FM system online; with digipeater installed on the Dental Tower and ongoing VARA FM familiarization experiments; Alachua ARES Operational Training Nets conducted monthly through August.
4. **DISCUSSION: DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.** KX4Z hopes that we have all read the draft. Notifications to ARES members of important events/information: there has been work on that part of the comms plan, and we are actually exercising it live today during the TS Nicole ramp up. KX4Z has posed questions as part of the agenda. First question – enough redundancy is there sufficient redundancy in our connections to the EOC so that we don’t get surprised by a sudden change from them – enough people looking at emails, monitoring, listening to nets. As of now, comms from the EOC come to us through Everbridge and then by direct phone/text messages to our leadership. Dalton Herding at the EOC sent Gordon and three other people his requests. We need Jeff to work on getting kinks out of their EM comms techniques to us (i.e., zoom links to attend meetings). Second question. Multiple methods getting information to people in adequate amount and time? Brett said the activation went well this time. Earl agrees. The techniques included telephone calls direct; emails to people who agreed to deploy in support of the EM’s TS Nicole activation request; deployment information went to all badged people by Winlink. Also nightly meetings on .820. We are careful not to release deployment information or FOUO information. Gordon suggests not forwarding Winlink address mail, but going to Winlink direct to pick up email that is addressed to our Winlink email addresses. That’s the individual’s call. Sign-on messages and JS8 system messages – we are too busy developing. Next question: detailed information – correct tone? By “detailed information,” KX4Z means the actual sensitive info that individuals should be getting. Is the information that is sensitive being sent out in a manner that adequately serves the sensitivity? Wendell and someone else thought that we’re doing a good job here. More detailed directions from EOC is at 2.6 of the plan...question is whether staffing requests are adequately being taken care of. As it is now, the EOC communicates by text with four of us; we communicate with EC as staffing is developed and then we inform the EOC. We say in the comms plan that detailed information may come to the individuals/recipients by a variety of means – today in TS Nicole by Winlink address to badged volunteers. Everbridge being added, b/c it was used yesterday and today to push information and requests with information to badged volunteers. We can send targeted Everbridge notifications to specific badged volunteers. Next question: layers of comms...this was page 21 of 36 in the draft communications plan. KX4Z read them off. Rosemary suggested runners if necessary – a very good suggestion. Next question: timely submission of documentation. We reminded folks tonight that people need to be developing their 214s live

during this activation, and recited the number of ways that a physical signed 214 can be collected. It appears that there may be a way to file the 214 online...we will work that. KX4Z recommended that on page 5 of the comms plan, in the event of an EMP, the protocol is/should be that you should use 3970 LSB, and the EOC tube radio is preset for that. Driving around in a post EMP environment without establishing comms with EOC isn't a good idea. Next issue: improve family prep? No one had specific requests. GMRS discussed. Other physical prep items were discussed. Toilet arrangements, and KX4Z will amend. Other comments: is this what we need for content? Brett will take the approved content and turn it in to FEMA format; then we'll have a communications plan for Alachua County ARES that will follow FEMA standard. By voice vote, the draft communications plan, with addition of the points made at this meeting, was approved by the membership. Culmination of a five year long effort!!

5. **VARA FM ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS DISCUSSION.** Vann got the ball rolling in exploring VARA FM and introducing it to our community.. He described how he had set up an experimental arrangement at his house, then with AA3YB and then Brett and Susan. EOC has worked VARA FM direct to KX4Z and it was FAST. KX4Z tested the VARA FM digipeater that Jon Simmonds built and that is now on the dental tower. Brett is weighing setting up a Winlink RMS gateway either on packet or on VARA FM. Susan recommended we maintain packet AX.25 as well, since EasyTerm can be used to do more than VARA FM, and they are complementary. Jon Simmonds noted that the 07 side has changed the port number. Port 7 is listed at 070 and port 6 is listed as 030. We may have to rejigger some stations from 070 to 030. 010 for VARA. We have to have people play with the three freqs and the modes and then we'll decide where to put our resources.
6. **CONNECTION DOCUMENT:** KX4Z went through each participant's way to use their particular gear for deployment digital connections. This is for people whose deployment gear (be it VHF/UHF or HF) does NOT have an internal soundcard interface. Instead, the direction is to people using a soundcard interface (such as a Signalink). The connection planning document is at the end of the Nov agenda. Folks were asked to print out and work the document. Suggests that people bring their manuals with them to the lab n'lunch on Saturday. Knowing pin outs, etc. Pins on mic connector...which number, how they are counted, etc. We don't want to destroy radios...shorting the 8v on the mic plug will harm the radio.
7. **BEATY AND DENTAL TOWER DIGIPEATER SUCCESSES.** Earl did the hardware part of repairing the equipment for Beaty and Susan did the coding work. John Simmonds pulled it all together. Our website now has an improved map with the various digital nodes; RMS stations, VARA FM, digipeaters through DARK and W4DFU. We now have an enormous range VHF data network. Kudos to Earl, Susan, and Jon for bringing GARC back fully on line. We are also looking at having an RMS at Beaty.
8. **FINAL COMMENTS: HURRICANE IAN AAR.** Brett will put his presentation in to the draft and will get it out within a week. Brett solicits emails for any other comments, and will include comments from last month.
9. **HURRICANE NICOLE STATUS.** Jeff Capehart reviewed the status of the storm; max winds expected tomorrow, 10 November, at 11:00. Expected to be primarily a wind event; rains to begin at 0600. Overnight winds tonight will ramp up to 25mph sustained at 6:00am. We don't expect much tonight. With a couple of exceptions, the EOC is fully staffed. There will be a 0500 meeting tomorrow in anticipation of the 0700 operational briefing that begins that 12 hour

operations period. Gordon asked if the EOC radio needed Essential Elements of Information? Susan is asking when the EOC might need EEI. KX4Z suggests that the shelters send text message to EOC if there's any news, and otherwise crank up the net at 0500. Will shut down net at 2100 and back up at 0500 tomorrow. Will let shelters know. Shelters can send texts to EOC/Susan for EEIs. Ring the direct number in the EOC with the information. Because briefing is at 0500, Susan suggests that the net begin again at slightly before 0500.

- 10. ADJOURN** at 2044 9 November 2022. An altogether unusual meeting – more like an operations overview in an actual battle scenario. Validation of this ARES groups' training and dedication over the past couple of years (Secretary's comment).